

Dear parents/guardians,

As we enter the summer break, we would like to share some resources which might be helpful to you and your teen over the summer if you have concerns over their mental health and well-being.

Please find attached the With Care tips sheet for parents and caregivers titled “**How do you know if you should be concerned about your child/teen’s mental health and well-being?**” from School Mental Health Ontario <https://smho-smsso.ca/>.

“Mental health professionals, have reassured us that children experiencing some sadness, worry, or even anger is natural during these challenging times. But some parents are worried that their child or teen may be suffering more – so how do you know? Do not forget you still know your child/teen best. You have the most important role to notice when your child is experiencing distress that can result in changes in their thoughts, their feelings or the way they behave.” (*School Mental Health Ontario, 2024*)

SMHO outlines the following **signs** that may indicate a mental health concern for older children and teens:

- outbursts of anger or distress
- frequent irritability
- feelings of anxiety and panic
- excessive worries and fears about the safety of family, friends, self
- increased defiance and opposition
- school refusal
- use of drugs and/or alcohol
- withdrawal from family activities
- withdrawal from friends
- ongoing negative remarks about self
- interest in activities from younger years
- declining grades, low motivation to complete tasks
- changes in eating and sleeping
- frequent talk about death and dying
- giving away possessions

The With Care document shares four things you can try with your teen to manage temporary distress.

We wish you and your family a wonderful summer and look forward to supporting your teen when we return in September.

Sincerely,

The WDHS Team

The following are websites to more resources:

School Mental Health Ontario [School Mental Health Ontario \(smho-smso.ca\)](http://smho-smso.ca)

Children's Mental Health Ontario [Find Help - Children's Mental Health Ontario \(cmho.org\)](http://cmho.org)

Psychology Foundation of Canada [THE PSYCHOLOGY FOUNDATION OF CANADA – Strong Minds Strong Kids – Psychology Canada](http://www.psf.ca)

Anxiety Canada [Anxiety Canada | Self-help Resources, Programs & Services](http://www.anxiety.ca)

Wellness Together Canada [Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health Support - Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie \(cscestrie.on.ca\)](http://www.wellnesstogether.ca)

LGBT YouthLine (text 647-694-4275) offers confidential and non-judgmental peer support through telephone text and chat services

Trans Lifeline (877-330-6366)

Parents For Diversity [Parents for Diversity | Diversity and Inclusion in Children's Education – Diversity and Inclusion in Children's Education](http://www.parentsfordiversity.ca)

The Black Youth Helpline (416-285-9944 or toll-free 1-833-294-8650)

CMHO Family Care Centre [Home - Family Care Centre \(cmho.org\)](http://www.cmho.org)

Mental Health Commission of Canada [Homepage - Mental Health Commission of Canada](http://www.mhcc.ca)

SickKids for parents/caregivers [Mental Health Learning Hub](http://www.sickkids.ca)

Hope for Wellness Help Line provides immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all indigenous peoples in English, French, Cree, Ojibway or Inuktitut upon request. 1-855-242-3310

Emergency Help

COAST Hamilton Mental health crisis outreach and support for all ages. Crisis Line (905) 972-8338; coasthamilton.ca

Kids Help Phone 24/7 counselling and information service for young people. Crisis Line 1-800-668-6868; kidshelpphone.ca

McMaster Children's Hospital: Child and Youth Mental Health Emergency Services (CHYMES) McMaster Located within the emergency department for youth ages 17 and younger. 1200 Main St W, Hamilton, ON L8N 3Z5

Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton (SACHA) – Crisis Line (905) 525-4162 sacha.ca (for 16+ only)

Call 911

More information can be found on our board website at [Mental Health and Well-Being | Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board \(hwdsb.on.ca\)](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca). Additionally, **HWDSB Helps** is a free and anonymous way for **students** to find help for themselves and one another or share anonymous tips. Tips may relate to student mental health, bullying, substance use and more. This is not a crisis line or counselling service. **Text to 905-963-0066.**